

**ENGLISH EUPHEMISM IN *BBC NEWS INSTAGRAM*  
ACCOUNT : A SOCIO-SEMANTIC PERSPECTIVE**



**Submitted As A Partial Fulfillment Of The Requirements For Getting  
Bachelor Degree In Department Of English Education**

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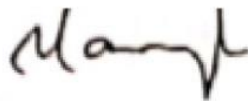
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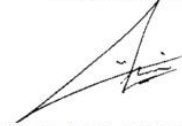
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Surakarta, July 21<sup>st</sup> 2021

The Researcher



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# EUFEMISME BAHASA INGGRIS DALAM AKUN *INSTAGRAM BBC NEWS*

## Abstrak

Penggunaan eufemisme masih sering menjadi masalah bagi pembelajar bahasa Inggris sebagai bahasa asing. Penelitian ini berfokus pada penggunaan eufemisme bahasa Inggris dalam unggahan akun sosial media Instagram oleh portal berita terpercaya dunia BBC News. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk (1) mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis eufemisme berdasarkan pembentukannya dan (2) mengklasifikasikan fungsi eufemisme yang terdapat baik di dalam video maupun di *caption* unggahan akun Instagram BBC News. Penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif karena mendeskripsikan data melalui bentuk tertulis dalam kalimat. Data dalam penelitian ini adalah bentuk eufemisme yang diperoleh dari unggahan BBC News sejak tanggal 1 sampai 31 Januari 2019. Teknik yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah dokumentasi. Analisis jenis dan fungsi eufemisme dikelompokkan sesuai grup. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa data yang telah diperoleh menggunakan metode dokumentasi dan observasi ini (1) jenis eufemisme yang terdapat di akun Instagram BBC News terdiri atas 6 jenis yaitu *metaphor* 5 data (25%), *circumlocution* 7 data (35%), *one-for-one substitution* 3 data (15%), *understatement* 3 data (15%), *part-for-whole* 1 data (5%) dan *common term* 1 data (5%) serta (2) fungsi dari eufemisme terdiri dari 4 jenis yaitu *uplifting*, *underhand*, *cohesive* dan *protective* sebagai fungsi yang paling sering mendasari penggunaan eufemisme.

Kata kunci: eufemisme, Instagram, BBC News, bahasa Inggris

## Abstract

The use of English euphemism has become an issue for English as a foreign learner (EFL). This research focuses on the use of English euphemism in social media daily post of trusted news broadcaster BBC News Instagram account. The objectives of this research are to (1) identify the types of euphemism and (2) classify the functions of euphemism used in video and caption posted by BBC News Instagram account. This research is a descriptive qualitative research because the data are described in the form of written explanation in sentences. The data of this research are the forms of euphemism from post of BBC News from 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. The technique of collecting data is by documentation. The analysis of the types and functions is classified by the same group. The result shows that (1) there are 6 types of euphemism found in BBC News Instagram account, *metaphor* 5 data (25%), *circumlocution* 7 data (35%), *one-for-one substitution* 3 data (15%), *understatement* 3 data (15%), *part-for-whole* 1 datum (5%) and *common term* 1 datum (5%) and (2) there are 4 types of functions of euphemism, they are *uplifting*, *underhand*, *cohesive* and *protective* as the most dominant function of the use of euphemism.

Keywords: euphemism, BBC News, Instagram, English

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Looking at the term people of colour on BBC News Instagram account will make us think about people whose skin tone is darker than the others, or let us call it black. Take another example of the use of passed away or RIP (Rest In Peace) that share the same meaning with die in explaining that someone is in mortal or forever go away from this world. That euphemism is common, most people already know

it, but how about developed and developing country? People will look up at the dictionary about the meaning since both words contain develop word. Why don't use the totally different term like rich and poor country? These replacements take English learners a second or two to understand when learning English through social media like BBC News Instagram account.

Pinker (2002:212) gave his idea of euphemism by saying that linguists were familiar with the euphemism treadmill and explained it as follows.

People invent new words for emotionally charged referents, but soon the euphemism becomes tainted by association, and a new word must be found, which soon acquires its own connotations, and so on. *Water closet* becomes *toilet* (originally a term for any kind of body care, as in *toilet kit* and *toilet water*), which becomes *bathroom*, which becomes *restroom*, which becomes *lavatory*. *Undertaker* changes to *mortician*, which changes to *funeral director*. *Garbage collection* turns into *sanitation*, which turns into *environmental services*. *Gym* (from *gymnasium*, originally "high school") becomes *physical education*, which becomes (at Berkeley) *human biodynamics*.

English learner who exposes him/herself to English more often to social media tend to learn language through online way by following certain social media account like BBC News in Instagram since it is easy to access and they will also know what is currently happening around the world. It is joyful to learn English while watching video or figure served by BBC News Instagram account of current news. This desire to learn English from BBC News Instagram account is inevitable from problem found by English learners by the existence of words whose meanings make the readers a bit confused.

It is important to get better understanding about euphemism. Therefore, this research discussed about the euphemism found in BBC News Instagram account as social media like this get a huge attention from English learners who are not yet accustomed to exposing with euphemism.

Realizing that the existence of euphemism in BBC News Instagram account could not be recognized well by English learners whose native and/or second language is not English, the researcher thinks that there should be a study about euphemism that will bring explanation and insight of such phenomenon so that the readers would get better understanding about euphemism they read in BBC News Instagram account. By this way, the brief introduction to euphemism can be used

by beginner to intermediate English learners who have not been accustomed to euphemism. So, this research is necessary to conduct.

Several researches about euphemism were already conducted by some researchers like Grinová (2017) with the title of Euphemisms in English Everyday Discourse, Olimat (2018) Developing a Model for Translating Euphemism in the Qur'an: An Intratextual Contextual-based Approach, Biryukova & Serozeeva (2018) The Correlation Between The Idiomacy and The euphemistic Potential of Phrasaeological Units in English, Ojebuyi & Salawu (2018) Nigerian Newspapers' Use of Euphemism in Selection and Presentation of News Photographs of Terror Acts, Setiawan (2018) Euphemisms in Cosmopolitan Magazine of United Kingdom and etc, who focused on the euphemism as a unique phenomenon in English but there is no research that study the euphemism type based on the theory of Allan&Burridge (1991) and Burridge (2012) for the function of euphemism in social media account which delivers daily news and current issues around the word like BBC News.

Based on the above background, the the objectives of this research are to find out the type of euphemism and function of euphemism in daily updates of BBC News Instagram account by tracing the post either video or just picture with caption within a month from 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

## **2. METHOD**

This research is a qualitative research. Creswell (2014:4) explains that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.

The design of this research is descriptive research since the research tries to explain the euphemism taken from source of information in the kind of written transcript from video on Instagram. According to Walliman (2011:10) descriptive design relies on observation as a means of collecting data. Observation can take many forms. Depending on the type of information sought, people can be interviewed, questionnaires distributed, visual records made, even sound and smells recorded.

The object of this research is the euphemism expression found in the running text or captions from each post either just figure or video from BBC News Instagram account within a month from 1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

The data of this research are the utterances containing English euphemism expression both spoken or written. The data are taken from BBC News Instagram account. BBC News is a member of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) that takes part in collecting and broadcasting news and current affair from around the world. It gives us daily news about any kinds of topic such as politics, economics, society and culture, education and etc, mostly the viral things people are talking about internationally. Instagram is a favourite social media among society. It is a platform for sharing information, interest, and even it can used as online catalogue and promotion for shops all around the world. People can upload video and figure with the following explanation then other Instagram user or usually called as netizen can give comments, share the content or save the post in their archive.

The data source are transcript (statements or opinion from people and fact delivered through running text in the video) taken from video and caption (the text following the video or figure to give more explanation about the post) of each posting on BBC News Instagram account.

According to Cresswell (2014:185), researchers as key instrument in qualitative research collect data themselves through examining documents, observing behaviour or interviewing participants. To gain the data in this research, the researchers collect the euphemism expression from the content uploaded by BBC News Instagram account by the following steps. First, gathering all contents uploaded in the Instagram feed by BBC News Instagram account. Copying the caption of figures and video uploaded each day from January 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> 2019. Secondly, reading intensively all the captions and watching the video to write down the transcripts in them. Next, scanning and finding the euphemism expression found in captions and transcript from each posting. And finally writing and arranging data of euphemism expressions by coding them.



### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Types of Euphemism

There are two types of euphemism found in *BBC News* Instagram account in a month of research from Jan 1<sup>st</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> 2019 as listed down on the table 1 below.

Table 1. Type of Euphemism

No	Types of Euphemism	Example	Σ	%
1.	Metaphor	1. turn her back 2. rolls 3. warrior	5	25%
2.	Circumlocution	1. extend the hand of friendship 2. profanity laden 3. little people	7	35%
3.	One-for-one substitution	-unemployed -disability -unofficial	3	15%
4.	Part-for-whole substitution	fighter	1	5%
5.	Understatement	1. claimed 2. could affect safe driving 3. negative chit-chat	3	15%
6.	Common Term	pass away	1	5 %
Total			20	100%

To make a better comparison between each types and functions of euphemism, the finding of the research was presented in the diagram below.

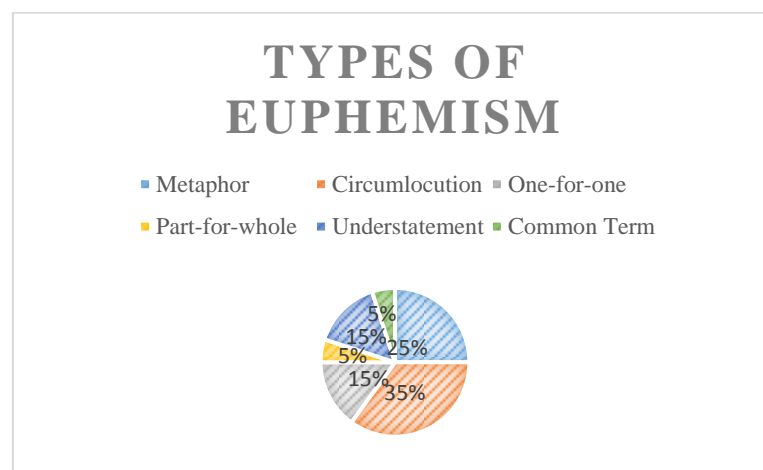


Figure 1. Type of Euphemism

From the 20 data of euphemism found in the *BBC News* Instagram account, there are six types of euphemism: metaphor 5 data (25%),

circumlocution 7 data (35%), one-for-one substitution 3 data (15%), part-for-whole 1 data (5%), understatement 3 data (15%) and common term 1 datum (5%).

The finding of the types of euphemism is supported by theory from Allan & Burridge (1991) who stated that types of euphemism are as follows: Figure, Metaphor, Flippancies, Remodelling, Circumlocutions, Clippings, Acronyms, Abbreviations, Omissions, One-for-one Substitution, General-for-Specific, Part-for-Whole, Hyperbole, Understatement, Borrowing, Technical Jargon and Common Term.

The previous research that discussed about the types of euphemism which is line with this research is from Aryani (2018). It also used the theory of Allan & Burridge (1991). The result showed that types of euphemism found shared similarity with the current research such as Metaphors, Circumlocution, and Understatement.

Among the types found in finding, circumlocution is the prominent one (35%) made up by 7 data. It means that circumlocution is favourable since it inserts a little part of something which is not preferable to say but less harmful. In other words it implicitly delivers taboo or offensive word in a longer expression and even roundabout which lessen the directness.

### 3.2 Function of Euphemism

Based on the analysis, there were four function of euphemism found in BBC News Instagram account which had been listed in table 2 below.

Table 2. Function of Euphemism

No	Type of Function	Example	Σ	Percentage
1.	The Protective Euphemism	1. profanity-laden 2. little people 3. disability	11	55%
2.	The Underhand Euphemism	1. extend the hand of friendship 2. negative chit-chat	2	10%
3.	The Uplifting Euphemism	1. unofficial 2. rolls 3. signed a blank check	4	20%
4.	The Cohesive Euphemism	1. fighter 2. warrior 3. hero	3	15%
<b>Total</b>			<b>20</b>	<b>100%</b>

This following figure is representing the function of euphemism. It is made up by four functions as listed below.

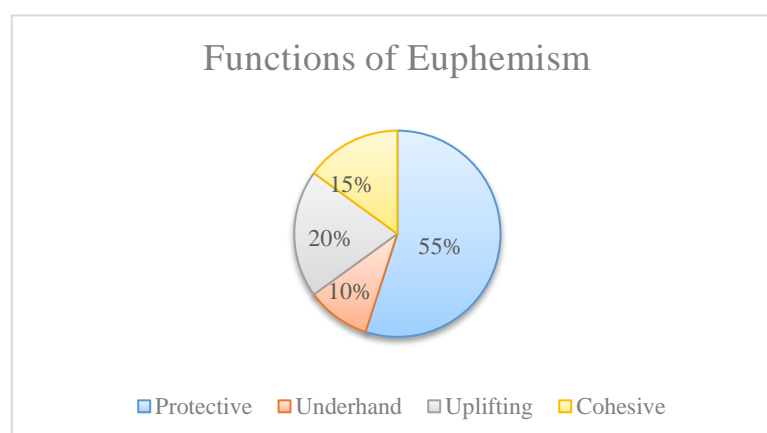


Figure 2. Function of Euphemism

The function of euphemism found in this research were only four. They were Protective Euphemism 11 data (55%), Underhand Euphemism 2 data (10%), Uplifting Euphemism 4 data (20%) and Cohesive Euphemism 3 data (15%). The comparison of the data is from the most dominant to the least is 11:4:3:2.

The function of euphemism is supported by the theory from Burrige (2012) who stated that there were 6 functions of euphemisms. They protective euphemism, the underhand euphemism, the uplifting euphemism, the provocative euphemism, the cohesive euphemism and the ludic euphemism.

This research is in line with the research conducted by **Setiawan (2018)**. This research also used the theory from Burrige (2012) for the function of euphemism. It found out that there were two functions of euphemism. The different functions of euphemism was caused by the different usage of euphemism.

Based on the above finding, it is apparent that **protective euphemism** is the **most dominant** function of euphemism used in the research because it reached 55% consisted of 11 data. It means that the most motive for people to euphemize is to avoid offence by saying the nicer word that will not make other people offended and shield the face of the people being said.

## 4. CLOSING

Based on the data analysis in the previous chapter, the conclusion which can be drawn are:

### 4.1 Types of Euphemism

This study explores the types of euphemism in BBC News Instagram account and find out there are only 6 types of euphemism compared to 17 types of euphemism suggested by Allan & Burridge (1991). The types of euphemism is also supported by Aryani (2018).

It is known that the most dominant type is circumlocution and the least dominant is common term. It proves that by using circumlocution will make the taboo word deemed. People tend to exaggerate the length of the expression to make it look like a term with different meaning compared to the taboo words while it is truly not.

### 4.2 Function of Euphemism

There are only 4 functions of euphemism in this research from the total of 6 functions based on the theory of Burridge (2012) which is in line with the research conducted by Setiawan (2018).

Based on the previous finding, the dominant function used in BBC News account was to avoid offence and to shelter or it is well known as the protective euphemism. The least used function is the underhand euphemism. It means that the main function of euphemism in this research is to avoid offence by saying nice word and avoid the rude one and the rare motive to euphemize is to mystify and misrepresent that may make a misleading understanding for the reader and viewers of the trustworthy BBC News media in Instagram.

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